

1 AN ACT relating to testimony of a child victim.

2 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

3 ➔Section 1. KRS 421.350 is amended to read as follows:

- 4 (1) This section applies only to a proceeding in the prosecution of an offense, including
5 but not limited to an offense under KRS 510.040 to 510.155, 529.030 to 529.050,
6 529.070, 529.100, 529.110, 530.020, 530.060, 530.064(1)(a), 531.310, 531.320,
7 531.370, or any specified in KRS 439.3401 and all dependency proceedings
8 pursuant to KRS Chapter 620, when the act is alleged to have been committed
9 against a child twelve (12) years of age or younger, and applies to the statements or
10 testimony of that child or another child who is twelve (12) years of age or younger
11 who witnesses one of the offenses included in this subsection.
- 12 (2) The court may, on the motion of the attorney for any party and upon a finding of
13 compelling need, order that the testimony of the child be taken in a room other than
14 the courtroom and be televised by closed circuit equipment in the courtroom to be
15 viewed by the court and the finder of fact in the proceeding. Only the attorneys for
16 the defendant and for the state, persons necessary to operate the equipment, and any
17 person whose presence the court finds would contribute to the welfare and well-
18 being of the child may be present in the room with the child during his testimony.
19 Only the attorneys may question the child. The persons operating the equipment
20 shall be confined to an adjacent room or behind a screen or mirror that permits them
21 to see and hear the child during his testimony, but does not permit the child to see or
22 hear them. The court shall permit the defendant to observe and hear the testimony of
23 the child in person, but shall ensure that the child cannot hear or see the defendant.
- 24 (3) The court may, on the motion of the attorney for any party and upon a finding of
25 compelling need, order that the testimony of the child be taken outside the
26 courtroom and be recorded for showing in the courtroom before the court and the
27 finder of fact in the proceeding. Only those persons permitted to be present at the

1 taking of testimony under subsection ~~(2)~~~~(3)~~ of this section may be present during
2 the taking of the child's testimony, and the persons operating the equipment shall be
3 confined from the child's sight and hearing as provided by subsection ~~(2)~~~~(3)~~ of this
4 section. The court shall permit the defendant to observe and hear the testimony of
5 the child in person, but shall ensure that the child cannot hear or see the defendant.

6 The court shall also ensure that:

- 7 (a) The recording is both visual and oral and is recorded on film or videotape or
8 by other electronic means;
9 (b) The recording equipment was capable of making an accurate recording, the
10 operator was competent, and the recording is accurate and is not altered;
11 (c) Each voice on the recording is identified; and
12 (d) Each party is afforded an opportunity to view the recording before it is shown
13 in the courtroom.

14 (4) **The court may, on the motion of the attorney for any party and upon a finding of**
15 **compelling need, admit into evidence an out of court statement intended to prove**
16 **the truth of the matter asserted.**

17 **(5)** If the court orders the testimony of a child to be taken under subsection (2) or (3) of
18 this section, the child may not be required to testify in court at the proceeding for
19 which the testimony was taken, but shall be subject to being recalled during the
20 course of the trial to give additional testimony under the same circumstances as with
21 any other recalled witness, provided that the additional testimony is given utilizing
22 the provisions of subsection (2) or (3) of this section.

23 ~~(6)~~~~(5)~~ For the purpose of subsections (2), ~~and~~ (3), **and (4)** of this section,
24 "compelling need" is defined as the substantial probability that the child would be
25 unable to reasonably communicate because of serious emotional distress produced
26 by the defendant's presence.